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Good Evening Chairpersons and Members of the Appropriations Committee.

My name is Melinda Montovani and I have the privilege of working for the **Brain Injury Alliance of CT (BIAC)**, where we provide services to the entire state of CT.

I am submitting this testimony in opposition to the Governor Malloy's Budget Recommendations for Human Services Programs. In his proposal, the Governor seeks to reduce or eliminate funding for important core services of the Department, including funding for the Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut.

I have worked at the Brain Injury Alliance of CT and have been receiving calls to our Helpline for the past 10 years. I speak with individuals with brain injury, family members, and professionals. Every one of these callers has a story. All the stories speak of lives altered forever by injury to the brain. I hear their story and work with them to find support and services to move forward.

I am asking that you reinstate full funding for the Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut so that I can be there to answer the Helpline when someone reaches out. I am asking that you reinstate full funding so BIAC can continue to meet its contract obligations with the Department of Social Services where we serve the community in so many other ways.

- The Department of Social Services contracts with BIAC to provide services required as part of the Medicaid ABI Waiver program. **The contract with BIAC is used as evidence in several sections of the Waiver application showing that DSS is meeting the obligations of this federal program.** BIAC's responsibilities *according to the ABI Waiver Application submitted to the Centers for Medicaid Services (CMS)* include:
 - Supporting the participant in Service Plan Development and providing information regarding participant direction
 - Disseminating information to the community related to brain injury.
 - Facilitating free monthly support groups throughout Connecticut
 - Statewide toll free support number, providing consultation and resource facilitation for persons who have sustained a brain injury, their families, caregivers and providers
 - Training and community education programs
 - Through BIAC, information about the identification and reporting of abuse, neglect is disseminated to clients, families, and their representatives.

- **In the amendments to both Waivers which has recently been proposed by DSS, BIAC is the only organization approved to provide advanced training for case managers.**

A recent letter in January of this year from DSS to Centers for Medicare and Medicaid services cites DSS staff shortages and a statewide hiring freeze as affecting the performance of the ABI Waiver program. If BIACs funding and services are cut, DSS would be unable to perform these additional responsibilities as outlined in the waiver thus risking compliance with CMS.

Despite every effort to control costs and to seek additional sources of funding, it will be increasingly become more difficult for BIAC to meet the obligations of our contract, including the mandated requirement for new training, without additional funding. We are seeking the reinstatement of our contract related funding that has been removed through attrition as well as a small amount of additional funding so we can meet our mandated obligations under the requirements of our state contract. Please create a line item for the Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut to at least \$150,000.